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Viewing cable 07QUITO1637, CORREA SIGNS DECREE TO PREVENT AIRING OF

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07QUITO1637**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07QUITO1637	2007-07-20 17:24	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://m.elcomercio.com/wikileaks/cable.php?c=d3d9446>
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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 1781
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 001637

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: CORREA SIGNS DECREE TO PREVENT AIRING OF

CLANDESTINE VIDEOTAPES

REF: A. QUITO 1573 B. QUITO 1607

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Jefferson Brown, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: On July 9, President Correa signed an executive decree prohibiting reproduction of clandestinely recorded video and audio without the authorization of those involved. The media association responded saying the decree was unconstitutional. While Vice President Lenin Moreno claims the intention of the decree was to protect the right to privacy, in light of videos implicating Finance Minister Ricardo Patino in possible corruption and rumors of additional videos implicating other members of the executive branch, it is likely the decree is an attempt by Correa to protect his administration. END SUMMARY.

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE ALLOWS FOR EXCEPTIONS

12. (SBU) The presidential decree, which officially went into effect July 18, alters an article of the radio and television broadcasting law by prohibiting transmission of videos or audio tapes, but not in all cases. It provides an exception if the video or audio is recorded by the media or public sector using its own equipment and with the purpose of impeding or providing evidence of a criminal act. This exception would conveniently allow the government to use clandestine tapings for its purposes, such as evidence against the 18 congressmen who allegedly offered to sell their votes in exchange for appointments in key government entities (Reftel A).

RECENT CLANDESTINE VIDEOS, RUMORS MORE FORTHCOMING

13. (SBU) The decree was announced a few days before Congress approved a vote of no confidence in Finance Minister Ricardo Patino on July 13(Reftel B). Suspicions regarding Patino were triggered by the airing of a video showing Patino conversing with representatives interested in selling insurance on debt bonds. Additionally, the decree came shortly after ex-congresswoman Gloria Gallardo planned to have certain unaired parts of the Patino video broadcast, which, according to her, would confirm that Patino delivered privileged information to Venezuelan banks.

14. (U) Recent incidents of release of clandestine videos include:

- national TV station Teleamazonas' broadcasting of a conversation between Patino and President of Congress Jorge Ceballos,
- national print daily HOY's reproduction of a conversation in which Sports Minister, Raul Carron, bragged about his influence on Correa, and
- the airing of conversations between Supreme Court President Jaime Velasco, leftist legislator Ramses Torres, and former vice-president and Constituent Assembly candidate Leon Roldos by various national media outlets.

MEDIA OUTLETS UNITE IN THEIR REJECTION OF CORREA'S DECREE

15. (C) Representatives from radio and television stations met July 16 to discuss the decree. They approved a statement that the media are in no way bound by "the unconstitutional executive decree" and that they will therefore continue to gather information from various sources and inform the public as they always have. A member of the board of Ecuadorian Association of Radio and Television told an embassy official that he felt that there was now a "common front" among journalists as a result of the decree. Representatives from numerous media sources that did not attend the meeting have likewise publicly affirmed their agreement with the published statement.

CONGRESS TO ISSUE RESOLUTION TO CONSTITUTIONAL TRIBUNAL

¶6. (SBU) Congress took up the issue in a special session on July 18, where it approved a resolution requesting the Constitutional Tribunal declare the executive decree unconstitutional. Members of Congress claim they have new videos of Patino, but that they will wait to release them publicly until the Constitutional Tribunal rules the president's decree unconstitutional. Members of Congress have even suggested that they are aware of compromising videos involving President Correa himself.

CORREA DECLARES THE LAW WILL BE ENFORCED

¶7. (SBU) Upon his return from Europe July 18, President Correa emphasized that authorities will enforce the new prohibition on airing clandestine videos. He emphasized that sanctions for violation of the broadcasting law are in place and could result in fines and even the suspension of the broadcasting frequency of the offending media outlet.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) With recent incidents of videotaping of President Correa's cabinet members, it seems unlikely that the decree originates from an altruistic desire to protect personal privacy. Rather, Correa is likely attempting to avoid any further embarrassments or distractions in the run-up to Constituent Assembly elections on September 30.

JEWELL